# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:742
ANSWERED ON:21.11.2007
SPREAD OF BLINDNESS
Deshmukh Shri Subhash Sureshchandra;Gangwar Shri Santosh Kumar;Malhotra Prof. Vijay Kumar

**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

(a) whether India is one of the worst affected countries of the world as far as blindness is concerned;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of blind persons in the country, especially in the tribal areas, State-wise;

(d) the State-wise financial assistance provided to deal with the problem of blindness to various States during the last three years till date;

(e) whether the funds released under NPCB has not been utilised by the States satisfactorily;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(g) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for effective implementation of NPCB to prevent the problem of blindness in the country?

## Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS)

(a) & (b): Out of the total 37 million blind persons (VA <3/60) in the world, 7 million are in India. Due to the large population base and increased life expectancy, the number of blind, particularly due to senile disorders like Cataract, Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy etc. is expected to further increase.

(c): A statement showing estimated number of blind persons, as per surveys conducted during 2001-04 (state wise) including tribal predominant NE States is placed at ANNEXURE I.

(d): A statement showing Central asistant provided (state-wise) under National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCVB) sice 2004-05 is placed at ANNEXUE II.

(e)&(f): The funds released under NPCB are being utilized by States for implementation of NPCB satisfactorily as per the approved pattern of assistance. However, unspent balance, if any, is adjusted during next financial year.

(g): The following steps have been taken under NPCB for effective implementation of the programme:-
1. Setting up of States Blindness Control Societies and District Blindness Control Socities in states/Uts.
2. Providing Eye care facilities to the needy people at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels through Primary Health Centres, district Hospitals, Medical Colleges and regional Institutes of Opthalmology.
3. Strengthening of Eye Banks in Govt./Voluntary Sector.
4. Financial support to NGOs for strengthening of their existing infrastructure for Eye Care and providing recurruing grant for Cataract surgery,
5. Organising Eye Donations Fortnight from 25th August to 8th September every year to promote eye donation.
6. Screening of School Children for detecting of refractive errors and providing free glasses to poor children.
7. Strengthening of Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology/eye departments of Medical Colleges by provding assistance for development of paediatric eye units/low vision/retina units and training infrastructure.
8. Imparting training to Ophthalmic Surgeons from Government Hospitals/ Medical Colleges for quality eye care.
9. Intensification of IEC activities to create awareness about eye are activities.